(re)creations of scholarly journals

DOCUMENT AND INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE
IN OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

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Title: (Re)creations of Scholarly Journals: Document and Information Architecture in Open Access Journals

This dissertation contributes to the research-based understanding of the scholarly journal as an artefact by studying the document structures of open access e-journals published by editors or small, independent publishers. The study focuses on the properties of the documents, taking its point of departure in a sociotechnical document perspective. This perspective is operationalised through a number of aspects from document architecture and information architecture: logical structures, layout structures, content structures, file structures, organisation systems, navigation, and labelling. The data collection took the form of a survey of 265 journal web sites, randomly selected, and qualitative readings of four journal web sites. The results of the study are presented based on choice of format and modes of representation; visual design; markup; metadata and paratexts; and document organisation and navigation.

Two approaches were used to analyse the study findings. To begin with, the remediation strategies of the scholarly journals were discussed; how does this document type, which has a long tradition in the print medium, take possession of the web medium? The ties to the print journal are still strong, and a majority of the journals treat the web medium mainly as a way to distribute journal articles to be printed and read as hard-copies. Many journals do, however, take advantage of such features as hypertext and full-text searching, and some use the flexibility of the web medium to provide their users with alternative views. A small number of e-journals also refashion the print journal by including modes of representation not possible in print, such as audio or video, to illustrate and support the arguments made in their articles. Furthermore, interactive features are used to increase communication between different groups, but this type of communicative situation has not yet become an integral part of the scholarly journal.

An electronic document is often viewed as more flexible, but also less constant, than documents on paper. This sometimes means that the e-only journal is seen as a less dependable source for scholarly publishing than print. A second analytical approach showed how the architectures are used to indicate aspects that can enhance a journal's chances of being regarded as a credible source: a cognitive authority. Four strategies have been identified as used by the journals: they employ architectural features to draw on the cognitive authority of people or organisations associated with the journal, on the cognitive authority of other documents, and on the professional use of the conventions of print journals and web sites respectively. By considering how document properties are used to indicate cognitive authority potential, a better understanding of how texts function as cognitive authorities is achieved.

Keywords: electronic publishing, scholarly journals, documents, document studies, open access, cognitive authority, remediation, document architecture, information architecture, knowledge organization